

Mateel Community Center, Inc.
Modification to the Conditional Use Permit and Special Permit

Application No.: PLN-2022-17653

Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN): 033-271-005 and 033-271-007, 053-020-011

Recommended Commission Action:

1. Describe the application as a public hearing.
2. Request that staff present the project.
3. Open the public hearing and receive testimony.
4. Close the hearing and take the following actions:

A) Adopt the Addendum to the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Report, make all of the required findings, based on evidence in the staff report and public testimony, and approve the modification to the conditional use permit and special permit as described in the Agenda Item Transmittal subject to the recommended conditions by adopting the Resolution of Approval in the staff report, and

B) Make all of the required findings, based on evidence in the staff report and public testimony, and set the attendance level for the 2022 events at 4,000 daily attendees subject to the recommended conditions by adopting the attached Resolution of Approval

Executive Summary

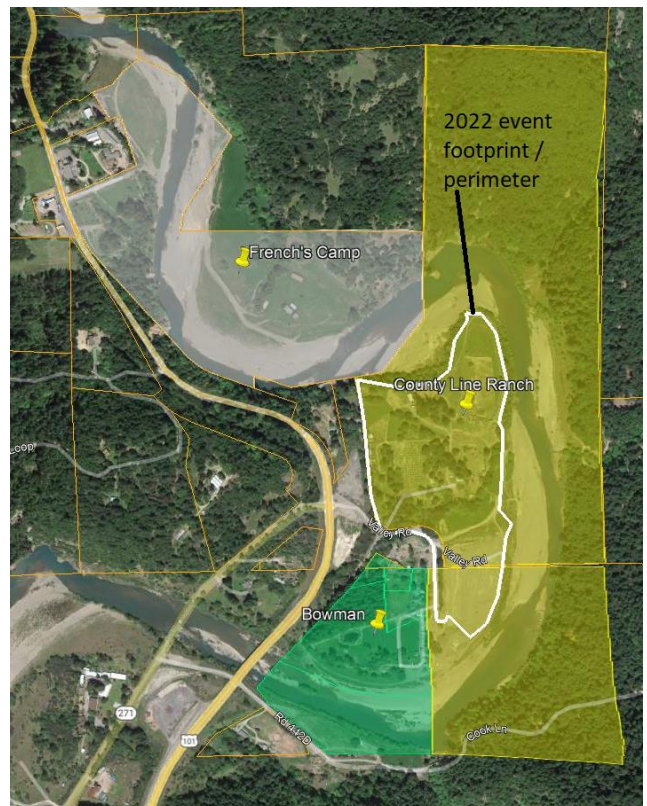
DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED PERMIT MODIFICATIONS

The project proposes modification of the approved Use Permit for the Reggae on the River (ROTR) music festival, in order to allow the following changes to the event:

1. Operation of two (2) two-day events in June and October instead of the one (1) permitted three-day event typically held in August (known as Reggae on the River)
2. Forgoing use of the French's Camp Site and exclusively using the County Line Ranch (formerly Dimmick) property for both events

Permitting Background – Reggae on the River at French's Camp

The first Reggae on The River concert was held by the Mateel Community Center at French's Camp in 1984. Initially a one-day event, after growing in popularity it was expanded to a 3-day weekend long festival featuring camping. Configuration of parking, camping, performance, and concessions areas has been consistently subject to change and tracks with increases and fluctuations in annual attendance levels. In 2006 the main concert and event infrastructure were moved to the 120-acre property known as the Dimmick Ranch (now County Line Ranch). The currently permitted version of the festival primarily uses the French's Camp site and was approved by the Planning Commission on January 3, 2013. The currently approved Conditional Use Permit and Special Permit (CUP 12-017, SP-12-030) initially allowed the annual concert event for five (5) years, from 2013 – 2017. In 2018, under a prior permit modification request the Commission authorized extending the term of the permit through 2022. The permit includes a variety of



Conditions of Approval designed to address potential impacts from festival. Key among the permit conditions is the requirement that the permittee hold a post event community meeting and submit an annual monitoring report for review and consideration by the Planning Commission. Under the terms of the permit, the Commission has the authority and responsibility to set the attendance levels for each year's festival, and ordinarily does so during review of the report for the preceding year's event. The permit last appeared before the Planning Commission in 2019. During the hearing set the attendance levels for the 2019 event at 9,000 persons and approved a second permit modification authorizing use of the County Line Ranch for auxiliary parking, inclusion of a cannabis vending and consumption area, and erection of a stage and late night music area. The 2019 was scheduled to be held by High Times Productions but ended up being cancelled. No events were held in 2020 or 2021.

Summary of current permit provisions

- allows operation of a 3-day event (Reggae on the River) during the first weekend in August.
- The permit is set to expire at the end of 2022. A separate application to extend the permit term and authorize additional events is forthcoming but is not being presented for consideration at this time.
- In recent years, the French's Camp property has served as the principal area for concerts, camping, concessions, parking, and related activities. The County Line Ranch (formerly Dimmick Ranch) is approved for use as an auxiliary parking area for 2500 vehicles.
- The permit allows operation of a cannabis vending and consumption area.
- Operation of a Late-Night Music Area operating from midnight to 4am was approved in 2019
- The approved Special Permit allows development within the Streamside Management Area and Buffer, which consists of seasonal installation of a flat car bridge crossing of the South Fork of the Eel River. The majority of event-related activities and infrastructure at French's Camp are situated on the east side of the river.
- Though authorized to occur, events were not held in 2019, 2020, and 2021.

Requested modifications to Permit

- The applicant is seeking permission to operate two (2) two-day events in lieu of the annual 3-day camping event.
- Events proposed for 2022 are:
 - the annual "Summer Arts & Music Festival" (SAMF) to be held on June 18th and 19th
 - the "Harvest Hangout" (HH), to be held on October 1st and 2nd.
- Both events are proposed to occur exclusively from the neighboring County Line Ranch property. The French's Camp property will not be used (the seasonal bridge will also not be installed)
- Both events will feature daily live music, starting around 10am and finishing by midnight.
- Daily attendance at both events will not exceed 4,000 persons and on-site camping will be restricted to staff, vendors, volunteers, artists, and guests of the property owners (maximum 400 persons).
- Parking for a maximum of 2,000 vehicles is expected to be needed and is available on the property.
- Portable toilets and hand wash stations will be provided for event attendees.
- Traffic control measures will be implemented along Highway 101 consistent with those used during similarly sized events at this location.
- Potable water for the ranch comes from a well located on the eastern side of the property which is stored in one (1) 50,000-gallon water storage tank.
 - Stored water from this tank will be used to supply water for both proposed events, which are not expected to require more than 10,000 gallons total.

Other events already authorized to occur at the County Line Ranch property

- The County Line Ranch is already authorized to host 2 other events under a separate Conditional Use Permit (CUP-04-38MMMMMM) from Humboldt County. The two other events are:
 - A three-day event during the third weekend in July (Northern Nights)
 - A one-day event during the weekend closest to July 4th or Labor Day
- Northern Nights also requires a separate Use Permit from Mendocino County because live music and camping occur within Mendocino portions of the ranch as well as the neighboring Bowman property
- The one-day event occurs exclusively within Humboldt County

The following chart summarizes past & present event information and locations:

#	EVENT	PERMITTEE / OPERATOR	HUMBOLDT PERMIT	ORDINARY VENUE (last 5 years)				2022 VENUE	2022 DATES	TOTAL #			
				(BEN) Benbow Lake SRA	(FC) French's Camp	(CLR) County Line Ranch	(BOW) Bowman			days	camping	attendance	vehicles
1	Summer Arts & Music Festival	Mateel Community Center	Application PLN-2022-17653	x				CLR	6/18, 6/19	2	400	4000	2000
2	Northern Nights	Northern Nights Music Group LLC	CUP-04-38MMMMMM			x	x	CLR / BOW	7/15, 7/16, 7/17	3	6400	8000	3000
3	Reggae on the River	Mateel Community Center	CUP-12-017MMM		x			N/A	N/A	3	4000	9000	5000
4	Cannablessfest	Proper Wellness Center	CUP-04-38MMMMMM			x		CLR	9/4	1		3000	1200
5	Harvest Hangout	Mateel Community Center	Application PLN-2022-17653	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	CLR	10/1, 10/2	2	400	4000	2000
			PROPERTY OWNER	Cal State Parks	Arthur Family	Outraged Orangutan	Conrad Bowman						

Summer Arts & Music Festival / Humboldt Harvest 2022 – event footprint(s)



Summary & Analysis

The proposed modifications to the permit being requested can be supported for a number of reasons. As detailed above, both the County Line Ranch and French's Camp properties are equipped with adequate infrastructure (water systems, access roads, parking, and camping facilities) and have a history of successfully hosting comparable events. The Summer Arts & Music Festival has been held in Southern Humboldt for over 40 years. The event has primarily occurred at the Benbow State Recreation Area but has not occurred in recent years due to COVID related public assembly restrictions imposed at State Park facilities. Relocation of the event to the County Line Ranch is not expected to result in new or additional impacts as the venues are less than 5 miles away from each other and primarily separated by Richardson Grove State Park. Keeping the event in a similar area of the county will help reduce the distance traveled by event attendees and confines traffic-related event impacts in the same general area. Approval of the changes requested is consistent with past approved modifications to the permit. The Conditions of Approval which remain relevant will continue to effectively prevent or minimize potential environmental impacts. The Mateel have extensive experience holding successful events at both locations and have submitted an operations plan which addresses operational protocols and procedures customary to holding events at the County Line Ranch.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on the successful operation of the event in past years, on-site inspection and monitoring provisions, required mitigation measures, as well as a review of Planning Division reference sources and comments from referral agencies, the Department believes that the applicant has submitted evidence in support of making all of the required findings for approving the proposed modification to the Conditional Use Permit and Special Permit, and setting the attendance level at a maximum of 4,000 daily persons for the 2022 events. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission approve the proposed modification and adopt the Resolution included in this report, pursuant to findings included, and subject to the recommended conditions of approval herein.

Alternative: The Planning Commission could choose to deny the modification request or continue the item further into the future to provide the applicant and staff time to address potential questions or concerns. This alternative should be implemented if your Commission is unable to make one or more of the required findings. Planning Division staff is confident that the required findings can be made. Consequently, staff does not recommend further consideration of this alternative.